

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

AUG 17 2005

1085

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Calexico Carnegie Library

other names/site number Calexico Public Library

2. Location

street & number 420 Heber Avenue not for publication

city or town Calexico vicinity

state California code CA county Imperial code 025 zip code 92231

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 15 Aug-2005
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall 9.28.05
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

California Carnegie Libraries _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/Library _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/20th Century Revivals _____

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete _____

roof terra cotta _____

walls stucco _____

other: gunite _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1918-1955

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Allison & Allison

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	641350	3615470	3	---	---	---
2	---	---	---	4	---	---	---

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David B. Ouzan, Mayor

organization City of Calexico date October, 2004

street & number 608 Heber Avenue telephone (760) 768-2110

city or town Calexico state CA zip code 92231

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name City of Calexico

street & number 608 Heber Avenue telephone (760) 768-2118

city or town Calexico state CA zip code 92231

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES : CALEXICO CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Section number 7 Page 1

Description:

As portrayed in the widely publicized 1916 drawings by Allison & Allison, the Calexico Carnegie was to be an elegantly detailed Spanish revival structure, centerpiece for a planned "intellectual park." Constructed in 1918 with a \$10,000 Carnegie grant instead of the hope for \$25,000, the building is more austere than originally visualized. But the survivor of numerous earthquakes, virtually empty since construction of the new library in 1986, retains its classic Spanish Revival presence.

The 85' x 36' rectangular building is one story over a raised basement and concrete foundations. The tile hip roof provides slightly projecting eaves protecting a row of dentils which surround the building. The recessed central front entrance is reached by low stairs. Narrow pilasters flank the entrance which is under a simple scroll. Metal handrails and simple metal wall fixtures are on each side of the entrance. Narrow triplet first floor windows on each side of the entrance are repeated at the ends, each with a basement level window below. The basement window to the right of the front entrance has been made into an entrance to the lower level. The rear windows are narrow and high, above a series of concrete buttresses believed to have been added after the 1927 earthquake. The only known photograph of the library in its early years is undated. It does not show the rear of the building. (See attached photo)

Intense efforts to find additional early photographs have been unsuccessful. However that one photograph does show what appears to be metal awnings above the central entrance and front windows, perhaps also a later addition. The interior of the building, with its maple floors and pine trim, remains virtually unchanged, and still has the original book shelves.

Studies conducted in 2000 by San Diego structural engineers indicate the building is constructed of brick and interlocking hollow clay tile, that is a generally sound structure with level roofline, showing no signs of failure of the framing system. Exterior surfaces are in generally good condition and the tile roof seems to be in excellent condition. Probably as a result of previous earthquake retrofitting, including the buttresses and gunnite installed in 1927, it shows little if any damage from stronger 1940 and 1979 earthquakes though some cracks are visible in the exterior plaster in the rear. With the application of gunnite, exterior wall thickness is approximately 16 inches. Modern code will probably require further retrofitting, however.

In spite of the years, the lack of complete revitalization of its "intellectual park" setting and the natural hazards it has endured, and the unfortunate but removable conversion of the window to the basement entrance, the old Calexico Carnegie Library stands out with its classic lines and continues to reflect the careful architecture and workmanship that is characteristic of the Carnegie libraries.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES : CALEXICO CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Section number 8 Page 1

Significance:

The Calexico Carnegie Library exemplifies community libraries of the later period of the Carnegie program. Calexico itself was settled in the early 1900s and developed rapidly as a trading center after the arrival of irrigation canals and the Southern Pacific Railroad to the Imperial Valley. It was incorporated in 1908. In the early years the older town of Imperial provided a branch library. Like women's groups in many communities before them, the newly formed Women's Improvement Club determined to seek Carnegie funding, enlisting the help of the Farmers and Merchants Club. By the time of the city's application in 1915, program procedures had become somewhat formalized. Emphasis had shifted to small towns and branch libraries, in accordance with Andrew Carnegie's philosophy of bringing the library to the people. Funding was dependent on cities assuming certain responsibilities and was granted based on population. The result was significantly smaller grants in the later years of the program which in fact stopped accepting applications in 1917.

The Calexico Carnegie Library also exemplifies the diversity of design in Carnegie Libraries. The period of Carnegie philanthropy followed soon after the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the City Beautiful movement. The new "free" library provided communities the opportunity to demonstrate civic pride with the elegance of Classical Revival. This was true in California elsewhere, but in California the Spanish and Mission styles, encouraged by Lummis and Polk, were also frequently used. In young Calexico, notable Los Angeles architects Allison and Allison found an entrepreneurial community with empty city land; the City Beautiful took the form of an "Intellectual Park". In this most southerly town in California, they proposed a building in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Here the dreams of Calexico ran into the increasing scrutiny of James Bertram, long delegated by Andrew Carnegie to administer the library program. Calexico requested \$25,000 but Bertram countered that the population indicated a maximum of \$10,000. To demonstrate its worthiness for the larger amount, city passed a resolution of library support in the amount of \$2,500 annually which would have been required by the \$25,000 grant, but Bertram was unmoved. The design was simplified and construction began. Though reduced in size and stylistic adornment, the Calexico Carnegie exemplified the workmanship, materials and artistic values which combined to produce the structures recognized today as the Carnegie Library.

Over the years and especially after World War II, size limitations placed on the Carnegies, and increased population, resulted in a demand for new and larger libraries. Many libraries were damaged by earthquakes, calling for expensive retrofitting or demolition. Today, increased technological capabilities are also expected. Many libraries were expanded, some were put to other uses, others were demolished.

The style of the Carnegie didn't lend itself to expansion, which would also have been made more difficult by previous earthquake repair. Though Calexico has remained a relatively small town, eventually a larger library was needed. After its completion in 1986, the old Carnegie was used for storage and gradually acquired a distressed appearance.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES : CALEXICO CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Section number 8 Page 2

However a growing preservation movement had empowered communities to recognize the historical and social importance of their Carnegie Libraries, often the only remaining civic structure of an earlier period. In California, 85 of 144 Carnegie Libraries remain, serving a variety of uses. The figures from nearby counties are more dire: in San Diego County none of five Carnegies remain; in Orange one of five; Riverside one of four; Los Angeles seven of twenty. In Imperial County itself, two of three Carnegies remain but the other, El Centro, was drastically remodeled after severe earthquake damage. It was Corona in Orange County, whose destruction in 1978 increased preservation awareness; since then no California Carnegie has been destroyed. Occasional plans had been suggested to raze the Calexico Carnegie but fortunately the community has rallied to save it.

The essential integrity of the Calexico Carnegie remains. Changes have been fairly simple and seem to adequately comply with registration requirements. Handrails (if added) have been deemed acceptable. The alternate basement entrance can be restored to its original form. The rear flying buttresses, below the high rear windows have served the library for 77 years. Location of early photographs would be very helpful. The presence of original interior woodwork may serve as a mitigating factor in positively evaluating the integrity of the Calexico Carnegie Library. In addition the unique "intellectual park", while not fully realized, still exists in the spacious several blocks containing the old Calexico High School building, the Historic City Hall, and the Calexico Woman's Improvement Club¹, in addition to the Carnegie. The Calexico Carnegie was recognized as an official project of "Save America's Treasures", April 22, 2000.

The Calexico Carnegie Library meets the requirements for National Register designation outlined in the Multiple Property Nomination, "California's Carnegie Libraries".

The City of Calexico has endorsed a proposed plan to renovate and restore the Carnegie Library as a community technology library and historical center to supplement the holding of the current public library and the San Diego State Imperial Valley campus library. Located just five blocks from the US Mexican border, this facility could act as a meeting place for residents on both sides of the border to learn about technology and talk about community issues. The Carnegie Library is still one of Calexico's most important symbols of its character and historic foundations, and could again become the stimulus for community advancement as envisioned by the Carnegie library program a century ago.²

¹ Original structures of the old High School built in (1915) is now San Diego State University, Imperial Valley Campus.

The historical City Hall built (1921) The Woman's Improvement Club, and the adjacent Historical Park now called Rockwood Plaza.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES : CALEXICO CARNEGIE LIBRARY

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Bibliography

Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

Curry Price Court. Structural Survey, Calexico Carnegie Library and Old City Hall. Report to City of Calexico, March 3, 2000.

Hems, Kenton. Initial Survey of Historic Resources: Carnegie Library and Old City Hall. Report to City of Calexico, March 7, 2000.

Kortum, Lucy. California Carnegie Libraries: Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced. Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. 1990.

National Trust for Historic Preservation. Saving American's Treasures. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2001.

Skehan, Pat and Bernie, and Lucy Kortum. Carnegie Libraries of California. www.carnegie-libraries.org. (frequently updated).

Van Slyck, Abigail A. "Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and the Transformation of American Culture 1977-1917." Ph.D. diss., University of California Berkeley, 1989.

Attachments:

Certificate of Designation of Calexico Carnegie Library as Official Project of Save America's Treasures, April 11, 2000.

etc.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: CALEXICO CARNEGIE LIBRARY

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1. SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES - ATTACH/
NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
2. IMPERIAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
3. WOMEN'S IMPROVEMENT CLUB OF CALEXICO, INC.
4. RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF CALEXICO

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Calexico Carnegie Library, Imperial Co., CA

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary consists of the northwest section of parcel #058-44601-01, Block 42: TSTE of Calexico: EXC S113FS. The boundaries include the west 142.5 feet of the parcel and the north 165 feet to form a rectangle that encompasses the library and its immediate setting.

Boundary Justification:

The parcel on which the library sits includes a number of non-historic public buildings. The boundaries chosen are boundaries of convenience, drawn to include the library and its immediate setting and exclude non-contributing buildings.

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Calexico Carnegie Library, Imperial Co., CA

Section number _____ Page _____ Photos _____

Photos taken by: City of Calexico
Negative: 608 Heber Avenue, Calexico 92231
Date of photo: June, 2005

1. West (main) elevation
2. North and west elevations
3. South elevation
4. Detail, north elevation